

THE

EXPLOSION.

A POEM.

Price New



[Print Nine-tenor]



# THE EXPLOSION:

OR, AN  
ALARMING PROVIDENTIAL CHECK TO IMMORALITY.

## A P O E M.

Occasioned by the late dreadful EXPLOSION of GUNPOWDER, on the Fifth Day of November, 1772, in the City of CHESTER; whereby a Company assembled at a *Puppet-Show*, performed by *George Williams*, were blown up, and many killed and wounded. Wherein is given a lively, striking and particular DESCRIPTION of that most deplorably dreadful and alarming

## C A T A S T R O P H E.

Interpersed with serious and moral REFLECTIONS, EXPOSTULATIONS and EXHORTATIONS, to Readers in general; but particularly MAGISTRATES and CLERGY.

To which is added,

NOTES; containing the Testimony of the MORAL HEATHENS and Others, against THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENTS; and likewise other NOTES, pertinent to the Subject of this POEM.

The whole designed as a Terror to evil doers, and an Alarm to those that are asleep.

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BY A CITIZEN OF CHESTER.

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— Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. LUKE xiii. 3.  
He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear. REV. iii. 6.

— by Heaven's Decree,  
Death took swift Vengeance —  
To plant the Soul on its eternal Guard,  
In awful Expectation of our End.  
Thus ran Death's dread commission, "Strike, but so,  
" As most alarms the Living by the Dead."  
Hence *Stratagems* delight him, and *Surprise*,  
And cruel Sport with Man's Securities,  
No simple Conquest, Triumph is his Aim,  
And, where least fear'd, there Conquest triumphs most.

YOUNG's Night Thoughts.

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Verſes occaſioned by reading the EXPLO-  
SION, a POEM; by a particular Friend  
of the Author.

A WAKE my ſoul, and join thy brother's lays  
To ſpeak the awful great Jehovah's praiſe.  
Like him be bold, and ſtrike the golden lyre,  
At once to ſhew a ſoul of love and fire.  
In virtue's ſtead, like him, to draw the pen,  
And brand the vices of degen'rate men;  
Virtue whoſe ſacred nature doth inſpire  
The breaſt of him whoſe true poetic lyre  
Flames forth with love to ſpread the Goſpel light,  
And calls the guilty world to wake from night;  
Warns them to ſhun th' approaching danger near,  
And bids them ſerve the Lord with love and fear.  
Dear fellow traveller to Zion's land,  
How doſt thou ſound th' alarm by God's command!  
God here foreſaw a witneſs ſure in thee  
To ſecond him in this *Cataſtrophe*;  
To warm the ſoul, t' infuſe the grateful ſenſe,  
And harmonize the works of Providence;  
T' unlock the myſtery and ſhake the rod,  
At once to make us love and fear our God.  
In ſpight of *Calvin's* blinded ſons, to prove  
*In every diſpenſation God is love.*  
Hark! England, hark! how God his love proclaims,  
Blown out to thee, by fierce *Exploſion's* flames.  
Oft had we ſat bemoaning Britain's crimes,  
With many an ardent pray'r for better times.  
To God's command, ſubmiſs, if he would ſpeak  
Thro' us, as inſtruments altho' but weak;

To

To speak by us, since by his love we saw  
 That love *unchang'd to men thro' William Law.* \*  
 Almighty God, to make our verses shine  
 Thy spirit teaches, and the glory's thine.  
 O let us simply, boldly speak thy praise,  
*Impartial love and universal grace;*  
 Give us such tongues and ready writing pens,  
 That we may prove ourselves thy faithful friends.  
 Give us such hearts, such dispositions give,  
 At once to speak and to thy glory live.  
 "Bound to no sect, and to no party ty'd,  
 "To *wisdom's* sons in ev'ry clime ally'd."  
 The *true Philanthrophists*, the *right elect*,  
 The *only men* † that never form'd a sect.  
 Such is my friend, his happy turn of thought,  
 Into such order and sweet accents brought.  
 His striking verse here speaks the truth indeed,  
 Enough to make the heart of stone to bleed;  
 And cause the briny tears to shower down  
 To him who dares the broken heart to own.  
 Behold the wondrous portraiture of one,  
 A man of every sect, and yet of none;  
 Who joins in every sect with truth and sense,  
 But will not join what's false on no pretence.  
 Such is my friend, such may I ever be,  
 A *mystic*, ‡ to the world a prodigy—  
 B—d—n's the name, who may he long survive,  
 Bear witness to the truth, and live to live.

Chester, Dec. 1st, 1772.

THOMAS B—K—Y.

\* See the writings of the late Rev. *William Law*, M. A.

† See Dr. *Thomas Hartley's* defence of the mystical or spiritual writers, annexed to his *Paradise restored—or the Blessed Millennium*.

‡ See the word *mystic* or *mystical* divinity—*Chambers's universal dictionary*.

The AUTHOR'S APOLOGY for the  
following POEM.

**H**OW shall the muse in this polite grown age  
 (So fond of froth, rejecting truths more sage)  
 Obtain the favour to be fairly read,  
 Who studies to employ his hand and head  
 To check the follies of the sons of vice,  
 And those diversions which to sin entice?  
 How shall a muse, whose aim is to reform,  
 Who dares not to a sinful world conform,  
 Who means to speak the truth in virtue's stead,  
 And boldly for religion lifts his head;  
 Draw the attention of the public eye  
 To read his verse, who ne'er presumes to vie  
 With men who write for learned praise or fame,  
 And make the world's applause their chiefest aim?  
 'Tis not to gain the poet's laurel'd wreath  
 My muse would in such striking numbers breathe,  
 But to prevent the soul's eternal death. }  
 Let those who can more justly win the bays,  
 I'll seek my brother's good, and Maker's praise;  
 This godlike pure disinterested flame  
 (Tho' known to few) shall ever be my aim.  
 I join with those who have this end in view,  
 May God increase the happy faithful few,

Who,



Who, free from faction and from party-strife,  
 Join but the virtuous and their godlike life,  
 And sure the generous and the virtuous mind  
 Must ardent wish my verse success may find.  
 Ye men of genius, and ye men of arts,  
 Excuse a muse devoid of shining parts;  
 For who expects a man good sense should speak,  
 Who wears a dirty apron all the week?  
 Ye men of gaiety (without your leave)  
 My subject calls for serious verse, and grave;  
 Design'd, if possible, t' impress a sense  
 A reverential awe of providence.  
 Or where my verse shall gain the hearing ear,  
 To work a wholesome tho' an awful fear;  
 Such as may cause the thoughtless soul to think,  
 And snatch from ruin who are on its brink.  
 And might I be so lucky thus to speed,  
 Ne'er mind who does it, if but done the deed.  
 The ruin is eternal I'd prevent,  
 Which makes me cry so earnestly, repent.  
 Howe'er unskill'd in verse my muse may prove,  
 The motive of my song is christian love.  
 Not such as now the blinded world would have,  
 That would not *from* his sins the sinner save.  
 They talk of charity, and will persist,  
 Nor see in what true charity consists.  
 Divest it of all holiness, and then  
 Your charity will suit such tasted men.  
 Sweet charity, that heav'nly grace divine,  
 They to this mould'ring lump of earth confine.  
 This, this shall live in lust without controul,  
 While unredeem'd the never dying soul.  
 Altho' the sacred page insists so plain  
 That sinners must be chang'd or born again;

When

When charity o'erlooks\* this one grand aim  
It is unworthy of the sacred name.

Ye serious moral muses of our land,  
My muse doth now at humble distance stand;  
And if kind providence my lipes shall bless,  
My muse has then her most desir'd success.  
'Tis not my fellow mortals vain applause  
I seek, but to defend his righteous cause.  
And as his wisdom shall direct my pen,  
I'll speak his goodness to the sons of men.  
In awful, solemn, or more softer sound,  
Just as the subject of my verse is found.  
Oft has my muse in softer numbers mov'd,  
And trac'd the subjects which she dearly lov'd.  
What her productions are, few need enquire,  
Since few will like them when they shall transpire.  
For,

\* Ye high rank'd leaders of th' ungodly crowd,  
Dress'd up in pomps and vanities so proud;  
If ye yourselves in reformation fail,  
Your charitable assemblies nought avail.  
If ye yourselves God's sacred laws discard  
(While ye the heart's conviction disregard)  
Ye with the Pharisees have your reward.  
Ye love your fellows both in heart and name;  
What thank have ye? for sinners do the same.  
For sake yourselves, each foolish vain pursuit,  
Make first the tree good, then is good the fruit.  
Thou giv'st thy goods to feed the poor, thou say'st;  
Yes and thy body to be burnt thou may'st;  
All this according to God's word may be,  
And thou thyself devoid of charity.  
Look that it be a work of faith and love,  
That spurns the world and lifts the soul above.  
If not, thou dost thy brother good 'tis true,  
But dost in *hairs* destruction's path pursue;  
And tho' I much commend the *gen'rous* act,  
You'll find my verse is founded here on *fact*.

For, who dislik'd blest'd *Young* or heav'nly *Rowe*,  
 Will soon anathematize my verse, I know.  
 Yet valiant for the truth I still will be,  
 May I but hope to join such company.  
 Give me, O power divine! to mark their plan,  
 And vindicate thy ways, O God, to man;  
 Give me to strike the consecrated lyre;  
 And warm the frozen breast with heavenly fire;  
 Give emphasis, and add a solemn weight,  
 Now while I sing this *awful stroke of fate*.

Read o'er my verse, my pray'rs for all are fervent,  
 I am your most devoted humble servant,

A CITIZEN OF CHESTER.

T H E





T H E  
E X P L O S I O N, &c.  
A P O E M.

**A**RISE my muse, O CHESTER muse, arise,  
Tho' struck with horrors of th' alarming cries, }  
And warn this guilty nation to be wise.  
Well may'st thou tremble, sure the mighty God  
Hath scourg'd our follies with a flaming rod. \*

B

But

\* " And such surely we may be allowed to think was that  
" awful dispensation with which the inhabitants of *this city*  
" were visited within the course of the last week; surely the  
" Lord's voice then cried to *this city*; and was not the voice  
" very shrill? Was not the call very loud? Surely this pro-  
" vidence, in which the hand of the Lord hath been so awfully  
" lifted up, may *well be allowed* to merit the name of a Rod;  
" and how unpardonable would it be to suffer such a loud ad-  
" monition and warning to pass unimproved? May this Rod  
" in particular, teach those wisdom who are either too giddy,  
" or too stubborn, to learn it by *gentler methods*.' See CHID-  
" LAW's Sermon on this occasion, pages 8 and 12, from these  
words, MICAH vi. 9. *The Lord's voice crieth unto the city,*  
*and the man of wisdom shall see thy name; hear ye the Rod, and*  
*who hath appointed it.*

But what hast thou to fear? 'tis thine to paint  
 The shocking scene, were colours not too faint.  
 For oh! what pow'r of words, what striking verse  
 Can half the horrors of this scene rehearse?  
 But fear not thou, O muse, lift up thy head,  
 This dreadful shock is nature's wholesome dread.  
 Altho' the pen now trembles in my hand,  
 Almighty God, I write by thy command.  
 Thy awful providence now asks my aid,  
 My service is thy due and shall be paid.  
 I'll wing thy wholesome terrors to the heart  
 That dar's from thee to folly's paths depart.  
 Direct my trembling thought and guide my pen  
 To check the follies of rebellious men.  
 Thy providence \* now calls, its voice I hear,  
 And boldly in thy righteous cause appear.

I now

\* There were some circumstances relating to this dreadful catastrophe, which are very particular and extraordinary; but I shall only here take notice of some few of them. And first, it is allowed by all, that it is both very remarkable and extraordinary, that it should happen on this particular day, and at such a particular juncture as that wherein we were most thoughtless and diverted.—Let Roman Catholicks make what use, and take what advantage they will, of this stroke of more than divine permission; I hope the use we shall make of it will be, to repent and forsake our follies, and prophane and corrupting diversions, that our iniquity and anti-christian sports be not our ruin; and the advantage that will accrue to us thereby will be unspeakable and full of glory, and terminate in endless felicity. But secondly, the hand of divine providence was so clear and so conspicuously displayed on this occasion, that none, who have eyes can help seeing it; I mean in the (I may say extraordinary) prevention of numbers of persons from going to this fatal spot. Amongst many, I shall mention but one or two which I heard as undoubted facts. One woman solemnly declares, that as she was going up the steps into this place, she was plucked

I now record it, not to be forgot,  
 How *Satan's temple* felt the *powder plot*;  
 That ancient CESTRA's sons may long remember  
 What happen'd on the fifth day of November.  
 But is there need our Citizens to tell,  
 Who felt the shock, and know the cause so well?  
 They think 'twas powder, but look deeper in,  
 You'll find the primary cause was sin.  
 Th' alarming circumstance now chills my blood;  
 For sympathy and horror seize the good.  
 "But where for refuge shall the guilty vail  
 When consternation turns the good man pale?"

Yet

plucked by the cloaths; she thought little about it the first time, but soon received a second, which somewhat surprized her; seeing nobody near; and making a third essay, received a more strong pluck; upon which she desisted and came back. — Another being sent by her mistress into her room to dress, in order to go to this place that night, was seized with a nervous tremor, and so prevented. — Behold! if ever, the hand of an all-pervading and *kind-restraining providence*! Many more might be taken notice of; among whom was a young man, who, tho' he was in the place most of the time, yet was so uneasy that he could not stay, tho' he scarce knew for why: whether or no he knew any thing of the lodgment of powder, I cannot tell; but he was so intimidated at the apprehension of some danger, that he had resolution enough to come out, tho' he could not persuade his fellows, and so escaped with his life a few minutes before the explosion. He was tried by the magistrates next day, or the day following, on suspicion of having been concerned in setting fire to the gunpowder, but was acquitted. These things, if true, as I doubt not but they are, are surely designed to increase our faith in a divine *providence*, while the deaths of numbers of young ignorant persons, together with those of innocent infants, may, and I hope will, prove an effectual call to reformation, to all who are now lamenting their loss; and that it may be so to us all, is the chief end I have in view, in thus recording the various scenes of this alarming catastrophe.



Yet seeing sin and folly so abound,  
 I fain would warn the sinful cities round.  
 But who shall write? Alas! what daring pen  
 Can stop the follies of the sons of men?  
 Could words have done it by their highest charm;  
 Our city had not felt this night's \* alarm.  
 Could words have done it by their utmost power,  
 We had not felt the horrors of this hour.  
 Could gospel heralds in th' Almighty's name  
 Have here prevail'd, we had not felt the flame.  
 Could God's own word have warn'd us from our sin,  
 We had not felt the tortures we are in.  
 Suppose they could have done it, *where's the men*  
*Who dare* to use these means by word or pen?  
 Nor *priest* nor *magistrate* will stop *sin's* course,  
 Then what avails our laws not put in force?  
 Well might we then expect th' Almighty's ire  
 To stop its course with instant flaming fire.  
 What else could we expect in sober sense,  
 But such a fierce alarming providence?  
 While priest and magistrate stand heedless by,  
 In vain is every method else we try;  
 An awful providence must now break in,  
 For nothing else can stop the flood of sin.  
 Is this, my fellow-citizens, the case?  
 And do we *dare* th' almighty to his face?  
 How *justly* then we feel his heavy rod,  
 The fierce vindictive justice of a God.  
 Blame not the powder, or the latent spark,  
 Nor curse a plot, engender'd in the dark;  
 Your mental darkness is the place wherein  
 The plot's contriv'd, the OPEN plot of sin.  
 'Tis sin and folly causes all our woe,  
 And kindles fiery vengeance here below.

*Diversions*

\* This poem was begun on that night.

*Diversions*, if the *sages* spoke the truth,  
In sin and folly plunge our tender youth.  
But here, methinks, the long rob'd sons of ease  
Can ill digest such naked truths as these.  
For where's the harm or sin to see, *say they*,  
An *innocent diverting show* or *play*?  
Thus they *disguise* it with a *painted name*,  
Nor will they see the folly, sin, or shame,  
Tho' every *wisdom's son*, in every age,  
And every serious heathen's moral page  
Condemns \* such follies, and accounts them sin,  
Repugnant to th' implanted light within.

Their

\* *Plato* (about the 325th year of *Rome*) would suffer no Plays in his common-wealth, because it was *dangerous to morality*.

*Aristotle* (born about 384 years before Christ) forbade the seeing of comedies to young people, because it would *poison their minds*.

*Xenophon* (who lived in the 105th olympiad) commends the *Persians* for not suffering their youth to hear comedies.

*Tully* declaims against them, as *the plague of society*.

*Valerius Maximus* looked upon the permitting of plays as a *blemish to the Roman state*.

*Tacitus* the same.

*Plutarch* in his morals, condemns plays as *lascivious vanities*, and *contagious evils*.

*Ovid*, that wanton poet, informs *Augustus*, that play-houses are the *nurseries of all wickedness*. In his poem *de Arte Amandi*, he tells his vicious associates, that the play-houses were the best *fairs* for unchaste bargains, the most commodious haunts for lewd and amorous fellows, and the only place for panders and whores. — [ *Hear ye this ye modest fair!* ] — Then adds, " 'Twas impossible for parents or husbands to keep their children and wives chaste, while play-houses were suffered in the city." In another place, he advises all who would live chaste, to withdraw from the play-house, and to throw away all *play-books*, &c.

*Propertius*, an obscene poet, cries out against the *Theatres*, as the *instruments of his ruin*.

*Isocrates*, a Greek orator, exclaims against all actors and players, as *scurrilous and mischievous*, and *intolerable plagues to a city*.

*C. Plinius*:

Their reason err'd; but 'twas not here the case,  
 The light they judg'd by *here* was that of *grace*.  
 By this the *moral Heathens* knew full well,  
 That sin and folly end in death and hell.  
 And shall we Christians (heav'n forgive my muse  
 If I the sacred Christian name misuse)  
 Shall we, who live in this enlighten'd age,  
 Who read tho' disregard the sacred page,  
 Shall we, who boast ourselves of knowing more  
 Than e'er was known to mortal men before,  
 Shall *church* and *state*, that priests may better thrive,  
 At open *immoralities* connive?  
 I now record it to our nations shame,  
 We do, and *worldly priests* shall bear the blame.\*

The

*C. Plinius Secundus* files stage-plays *effeminate arts*, altogether unbecoming men, and applauds the Emperor *Trajan* for banishing them out of the *Roman* empire.

*Solon*, one of the wisest men of *Greece*, condemned plays, as *evils not to be suffered in a city*.

Many more *Heathens* might be produced, as *Quintilian*, *Macrobius*, *Juvenal*, *Horace*, *V. Paternulus*, *Diod. Siculus*, &c. but these are sufficient at present.

\* " If religion was at this time in a most flourishing state  
 " amongst us, it would be great *injustice* to suppose that the  
 " clergy had not, under God, been the *chiefest instruments* in  
 " building it up to this state of perfection, since they are con-  
 " sidered by our Saviour as the *salt and light* of the world,  
 " which are to preserve it both from darkness and corruption.  
 " Seeing then that an universal corruption of manners is, on  
 " all hands, confessed to overspread this professing Christian  
 " nation, nothing can be more *reasonable* in itself, more *suitable*  
 " to the *present state* of things, than for *every clergyman*, where-  
 " ever his lot is fallen, to suspect himself to have, in *some degree*  
 " or other, contributed to this common calamity, and to be *more*  
 " or *less* chargeable with the guilt of it, and to try to discover  
 " his *own state*, by such questions as these. Have all ages and  
 " conditions of people under my care, had their proper instruc-  
 " tion



The cause explor'd, let's now attend, and see  
 The dismal scenes of this catastrophe.  
 The dreadful scenes which now my muse would draw,  
 Is what I can't express, altho' I saw.

'Twas on an ev'ning, when the skies were clear,  
 And magistrates were lull'd in boozing chair,  
 While some perhaps were telling (good old story)  
 That *Powder-plot* prevented is our glory;  
 While bonfires blazing, and, to raise our joy,  
 The lofty hissing rocket mounts the sky.  
 Thus were we sporting with important time,  
 And with our *sins* too, a still greater crime.  
 In short, to eat and drink, and rise to play,  
 The chief intent and business of the day.  
 Thus while we were in mirth and glee sat down,  
 And knew no danger to alarm the town,  
 Swift as the flashing spark from smitten steel,  
 An instant shock we altogether feel.  
 Conversing serious sat my friend and I,  
 When lo! the fierce explosion bursts; the sky  
 Is rended with the burst, expuls'd the air,  
 And quick convulsions all the city share;  
 The dog starts up, more rous'd than heretofore,  
 We rise to see, but no one's at the door.  
 But ah! how soon we hear the dismal yell,  
 When lo! a voice cries, murder, fire, a bell!

The

"tion and warning from me, so that I have spared no folly,  
 "vanity, indulgence, or conformity to the world, that hurts  
 "men's souls, and hinders their progress in piety? Have I  
 "done all that by my preaching, life and example, which Christ  
 "expects? &c. &c." See a serious answer to Dr. Trapp's sermon on the folly of being *righteous overmuch*, by the late truly pious and judicious William Law, M. A.

The bell is rung, the city takes alarm,  
 Like bees unhiv'd, behold the people swarm;  
 When neighbour to their fellow-neighbour cries,  
 What smoak is this that so beclouds the skies?  
 The next cries out, an earthquake sure is broke,  
 See, see the dust, I felt the mighty shock.  
 A third cries out, pray tell me, I desire,  
 Where is th' unhappy house that's set on fire?  
 An answer comes, half screech and half despair,  
 " 'Tis *Punch's Op'ra* blown into the air."  
 With cries and shrieks the streets and rows are fill'd,  
 Swift bring report they surely all are kill'd.  
 And, to advance the cries and shrieks still higher,  
 Behold! they cry, "the place is all on fire!"  
 Somebody come, make haste, come back this way,  
 And help us with the water-engine, pray!  
 But hark the sound, just as we chance to meet  
 The rumbling engines hurry down the street,  
 Distracted mothers now shriek out amain  
 To find their absent children, but in vain;  
 The husband cries "my cursed wife, I know,  
 "Has sent my child, my infant, to the *show*."  
 The poor distracted wife cries out—my child—  
 The neighbours hold her, see, she's running wild;  
 Her breath is spent, and swooning stops her cries,  
 Some water quick, make haste, she faints, she dies.  
 The poor spectator knows not what to do,  
 For thus they clamour all the city thro'.  
 Out cries a sister for a brother lost,  
 Or brother whom a sister's heart ingross'd.  
 But whither shall the poor mad bedlams fly,  
 But cry for mercy to the threat'ning sky.  
 Some wring their hands, while others tear their hair,  
 I'll urge my way, the fight I cannot bear.

Mean

Mean while, rejoicings but enhance our dread  
 By squibs and crackers flying round one's head.  
 Up fly the fire-sticks, thrown by 'rabbling boys,  
 Or guns and pistols try to drown the noise.  
 But these are hush'd, and greater noise prevails,  
 Deep yells, loud cries, and melancholy tales.  
 While all conspire the trembling soul to fright  
 And deeper sink the horrors of the night :  
 When lo ! quite down the street the crowds are got,  
 But halt before the wretched fatal spot.  
 Down to the place with eager expectation,  
 Each runs to find the child or dear relation.  
 No sooner am I come, and lift my head,  
 But some are carry'd half alive, some dead.  
 What dismal sight is that ! O bring a light ;  
 No — keep it back, it will the women fright,  
 What e'er you do, don't let it come to sight. }  
 They who before stood only in suspense,  
 Are sunk in black despair, and lost to sense.  
 Distractions seize them, and quite wild they cry,  
 My wife ! my husband ! must we part ? I die.  
 My child, my only child ! Oh ! must we part !  
 Oh ! worse than death ! we must ! 'twill burst my  
                     heart,  
 Halloo ! stand clear again, let room be made,  
 Here comes a breathless victim, dead young maid ;  
 Another, and another still, is brought,  
 'Till scarce my spirits can support my thought.  
 A frightful spectacle ! the next I saw,  
 Came led along with face black, red and raw.  
 Alas ! what numbers \* here are burn'd and kill'd !  
 They say, the new infirm'ry must be fill'd.

C

Fire

\* The number is computed to about one hundred and ten, out of which near forty died.



Fire wounds more swift than shafts of pointed steel,  
 Then who can tell the tortures they must feel?  
 In vain, my muse, in vain are all thy aims  
 To paint the tortures of the burning flames.  
 This scene confounds my muse, she's in a fright,  
 To paint the dreadful horrors of the night.  
 A night wherein so many victims bleed,  
 Alas! Alas! a shocking night indeed.  
 How shall my muse their horrid fate deplore,  
 So fill'd with *mirth and humour* \* just before?  
 Just heard the pleas'd spectators laugh'd aloud,  
 A poor unthinking and ungodly crowd.  
*Williams*, with imprecations, just before  
 To *Hell* invites a *prostituted whore*.

" I have (said he) a story for to tell,  
 " To-night there is a supper great in *Hell*,  
 " I am now come t' invite thee, *Oyster Nell*,  
 " (If thou to come this time wilt be so civil)  
 " To open oysters for the hungry devil;  
 " Most d——nably he opens wide his mouth,  
 " Methinks 'twould reach from farthest north to  
 south."

The fulsome jest is past — with fresh suspense  
 They wait to hear what next he would dispense.  
 Each fav'd spectator diff'rent tale affords,  
 Nor certify what were his dying words;  
 Some say these were the last he utter'd o'er  
 Time was, time is, and time shall be no more.  
 Then saw the light'ning of the sudden squall  
 And cry'd, the Devil's coming for us all.  
 When instant flames, with fierce explosion broke,  
 The lab'ring building to its basis shook.

Thro'

\* *To the sons of mirth and humour*, was the first salutation in his hand-bill.

Thro' heaving floors Vestuvia's belch distends,  
 And massy walls with instant light'ning rends ;  
 All horror, consternation, and despair,  
 And quick as thought they burst into the air ;  
 Then down again, with all the wreck, they go,  
 And buried in the ruins lie below.  
 A molten hail-shower covers all the ground,  
 Expulsions crash the neighb'ring windows round ;  
 And dust and sulphur fills the hemisphere,  
 While earth's convulsions all the city share.

Attend, revere, O sinful BRITISH nation,  
 This emblem of the world's great conflagration.  
 Awake, awake, before it be too late,  
 And read this omen of approaching fate.  
 Hark ! giddy, thoughtless soul, all mirth and glee,  
 " *A moment, and the world's blown up to thee ;*  
 " *Already hath the fatal train took fire, \**"  
 And shortly shall th' immoral plot transpire.  
 Stop, stop, ye rapid crowds, and look *within*,  
 Already are your souls on fire by *sin*,  
 Tho' strange you think it, hear th' Apostle tell,  
 Your very *tongues are set on fire of hell*.  
 The truth hath wrote it in the sacred book,  
 O ! look up to the brazen serpent, look ;  
 Look to your Saviour, glorious anti-type,  
 See how ye wound him, ev'ry sin's a stripe.  
 Beneath your crush, see how he bleeds and dies ;  
 Yet hark ! for you he pleads his dying cries,  
 " Father forgive the rebels, O forgive,  
 " I die that sinners may repent and live,  
 " In order to escape eternal pain : "  
 Then O, repent, nor let him die in vain.

C 2

O may

\* Night Thoughts.

O may my verse by any means prevail,  
 While I the hapless victims dead bewail;  
 O may repentance to our land be giv'n!  
 For which, I thus expostulate with heav'n.  
 Almighty pow'r! altho' we wond'ring stand,  
 We see thy judgments, and confess thy hand;  
 Our city now hath felt thy flaming rod,  
 The fierce vindictive justice of a God.  
 Or rather let me say, thy *mercy* here  
 Puts on an aspect terribly severe.  
 Altho' we say, 'tis like a heavy curse,  
 This lesser ill, perhaps, may stop a worse;  
 Perhaps our *guilty nation*, thus alarm'd,  
 (While Satan's instruments are thus disarm'd)  
 May see their danger and reform their crimes,  
 And BRITAIN'S nation see less wicked times.  
 Almighty power! thy judgments are abroad;  
 O let us hear and fear and turn to God.  
 While thou the mighty war begins't to wage,  
 O stop the follies of a guilty age;  
 May priest and magistrate confess their fault,  
 And Satan's emissaries fear and halt.  
 Let not the priest, (no longer *Satan's friend*)  
 Such *innocent diversions* dare defend.  
 Such *innocent diversions*! cursed phrase,  
 To sooth the follies of these vicious days.  
 O! blind to wisdom, blind to gospel truth,  
 That cannot see these things corrupt our youth.  
 When will ye wake, ye drowsy teachers, when,  
 And see the follies of the sons of men?  
 When will ye rise (yourselves first wide awake)  
 And warn the fools to stop for Jesus sake?  
 When will ye judge by God's unerring word,  
 And know yourselves the terrors of the Lord?

When



When will ye rouse the magistrates, to stand  
 Against the wickedness of BRITAIN'S land,  
 That *Players* may no longer harbour here,  
 And BRITAIN'S laws may stop the mad career;  
 That godly men, in answer to their prayers,  
 May see an end of *Puppet-shews* and *Plovers*;  
 That these ungodly miscreants may not defile  
 The thoughtless youths of lawless BRITAIN'S isle;  
 That virtue once again may shew her face,  
 Tho' now discountenanc'd in ev'ry place;  
 That christian virtue (vice once put to shame)  
 May spread o'er all who bear that *sacred name*?  
 Then shall the Christians lift their drooping heads,  
 Whose thoughts for you do now disturb their beds;  
 Who now, as conscious of your wretched doom,  
 Would fain dissuade you from the *wrath to come*.  
 Fly from your sins while mercy may be had,  
 Or ask no more why Christians look so sad.  
 How should the Christian look as all were well,  
 When crowds who bear that name rush down to hell?  
 How can ye dare expect their warm applause,  
 While trampled under feet their master's cause, }  
 And none will execute their country's laws?  
 Surely the Christian needs must weep for grief,  
 And cry to Heaven's justice for relief.  
 What wonder then if Heav'n should hear their cries,  
 And let their pray'rs be answer'd from the skies.  
 His welcome Will be done, his will is ours,  
 Whether he comes in *wrath's* or *mercy's* powers.  
 He knows how best to deal th' effectual blow,  
 That sin and folly may no farther go.  
 O! that our nation now may see his hand,  
 And sin and folly soon be put to stand!  
 O could I help to sink his flaming dart  
 Deeper and deeper in the thoughtless heart!

O could

O could the numbers of my trembling muse  
Excite his love or shew his judgment's use!

O view the bleeding victims, thoughtless souls,  
And know 'tis God your folly thus controuls.  
O view th' expiring mortals, wicked men,  
Nor dare to act such impious scenes again.  
Behold, the cap'tal master of the art,  
While all his burning audience feel the smart;  
See, see the wretch blown up into the sky,  
And all his *arts* and *puppets* with him fly, }  
Then buried in the blazing ruins lie.  
Haul'd out from under timber, stones and fire,  
Some crush'd to death, some ready to expire;  
See, see, the dying mortals haul'd along, }  
Nor think the scene less shocking than my song,  
Nay but my verse must do the subject wrong;  
Ear cannot bear, much less can numbers tell  
The cries and groanings of our hospital.  
What thought can e'er conceive, what pen pourtray  
The scene, while thus they howl both night and day;  
This, with the thoughts of that tremendous night  
While thus we were employ'd 'till morning light;  
When, see, no sooner were our lights put out,  
But joiners run with coffin-boards about;  
And ceaseless clamours of the passing-bell  
Proclaim how thick to death the victims fell.  
O Death, with thy austere triumphant brow,  
How instantaneous was thy conquest now!  
Grim king of terrors, O! how strong, dread king,  
Must be thy horrors if undrawn thy string!  
O cruel victor, by the sting of sin  
How dost thou wound the guilty soul within!  
Yer, thro' our Lord, *his friends* shall conquer thee,  
Thanks be to God, who gives the victory.

But

But O what endless torments, dread, and woes,  
 Await and seize by death the Saviour's foes !  
 Not many nights but screeching ghosts were seen  
 To fright the passenger at dusky e'en ;  
 The talk each day's of what was seen last night,  
 And who fell down and could not bear the sight.  
 Strange sights and cries, with many a dismal groan,  
 Near *Mary's Church* \* and neighb'ring *Glover's Stone*.  
 That this is fact, spectators best can tell,  
 And those who near these haunted places dwell.  
 This scene, I say, were all its horrors known,  
 Would surely rend the hardest heart of stone.  
 Will nothing move you, O ye stony hearts ?  
 Think how the wretched raw-bone victim smarts.  
 But ah ! more dreadful still that flaming goal,  
 In which is plung'd the guilty sinful soul,  
 Descending swiftly in a flash of fire,  
 The *Devil-actor* † now receiv'd his ire.  
 For how could mercy (such his doom) prevent  
 Who had not time allow'd him to repent ?  
 'Tis mercy's property to cleanse from sin  
 By true repentance, and a change within.  
 But he who thus without repentance dies,  
 (If Christ spoke truth) must perish from the skies.  
 O then be warn'd, ye brothers of the art,  
 Or you shall surely feel eternal smart.

Oft had the *youth corrupter*, crowds confess,  
 Stood foremost in the kingdom for success ;  
 (Provoking

\* *St. Mary's Church* is the place where *Williams*, his Wife and relations were all buried ; when *once* reading the burial service over them was thought sufficient.

† The word *Devil-actor* refers to his acting the part of the Devil each night, by an artificial figure, usher'd out by a flash of fire made with powder,



(Provoking God's avenging hand to strike)  
 Perhaps the world hath not produc'd his like ;  
 So oft he made that *Playhouse motto* good,  
 Reversefy spoke and rightly understood.  
 " To make our youth in sin and folly bold,  
 " Live o'er each scene and be what they behold."  
 Assiduous to improve our age in sin,  
 In weakest essays did this *droll* begin ;  
 But now, thro' countenance and inclination,  
 His *poison'd wit* would soon corrupt a nation.  
 That he could please the swearing sailors well,  
 His residence, *mad Liverpool*, can tell.

Forgive me, grand Lerpilians, while I dare  
 To call in question, all your governing care.  
 Yes, *mad* I call you, O that ye but saw  
 Their sin who *wink* at breakers of God's Law.  
 O that ye saw the *consequence* of sin,  
 How it deforms th' immortal mind within.  
 Ye sons of commerce, by the seas *unaw'd*,  
 Say, did you learn such things as these abroad ?  
 Or, if such scenes as these ye did but name,  
 Would not the very Indians blush for shame ?  
 Blush then, ye men of genius and of arts,  
 Who boast your native Isle, and nat'ral parts.  
 Alas ! what's genius, parts, or arts, or trade,  
 While virtue and religion are betray'd ?  
 Expect to hear your streets with curses sound,  
 While in your streets transgression's school is found ;  
 No longer wonder at th' immoral age,  
 While yet ye harbour puppet-shew or stage ;  
 Expect to hear the imprecating curse,  
 Sound too from infant lips, a sound that's worse.  
 From lisping babes, who scarce their names can tell,  
 Yet call on God to send them swift to hell.

O horrid

O horrid found to every good man's ear !  
 Alas ! what young disciples Christ has here,  
 Taught to despise betimes God's holy fear !  
 Are these the Christians baptiz'd in his name,  
 Taught to abuse it void of dread or shame ?  
 Christians (forgive me heav'n my muse dare tell)  
 They 're sin's disciples in the *school of hell*. \*

D

While

\* The great and renowned Bishop Tillotson in particular, speaks very warmly upon this subject. When speaking of some parents, he says, "They are such monsters, I had almost said Devils, as not to know how to give good things to their children.—Instead of bringing them to God's Church, they bring them to the *Devil's Chappels*, to *play-houses*, and places of *debauchery*, those SCHOOLS and NURSERIES of *lewdness* and *vice*." Vide his Sermon on Education of Children. P. 153, 154.

Tertullian calls the play-house the *sink of debauchery*, the *chappel of venus*, and a *barwdy-house*; and that as many as sit in the play-house, *so many unclean spirits are present*. This father gives an account of a christian woman, who, by going to the *play-house*, was possessed with the Devil; and when at his calling out, he was asked by the Exorcist, how he durst enter into a *christian*? He answered, *I found her upon my Ground!* Look therefore, adds Tertullian, upon all the engaging and pleasing sentences, as *honey dropped from the bag of a toad*.

Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived A. D. 192, declares against stage-plays, as *schools of impiety*, *pestilent sports*, and *introductions to all kinds of immorality*.

Gregory, who flourished A. D. 370, says, that they are the *propagators of all lewdness*, and that the play-house is the *wanton's shop*.

So much, for what only some of the heathens testified against theatrical entertainments, but it would fill a volume to transcribe them all; let us now descend to less antient oracles.

St. Chrysostom reproves the people of Antioch for their resorting to play-houses, which he stiles the *Devil's conventicles*; and says, that stage-plays are the *Devil's pomps*, *fables of Satan*, *diabolical assemblies*, *impure food of the Devil*.—[And will ye, O ye professing christians, be fed with this impure food?—Rather seek ye the bread that cometh down from Heaven.—Beware, lest your Eyes catch

While you yourselves to *school of play-house* go,  
 You send your child and servant to the shew.  
 Ye Cestrians, and ye Liverpolians proud,  
 These things for vengeance surely cry aloud;  
 Yet not for you alone my muse is warm'd,  
 For every city wants to be alarm'd;

O may

*catch the blast, and ye make a covenant with eternal death!*] Nay, ye not only see, but hear unclean words and obscene songs—which to *misses and masters of boarding-schools, &c. must be fine diversion!*—Where, for goodness sake, is now your boasted *reason*? when even the dictates of *common modesty*, not to say *morality*, are too strong for you.—Now if neither the rules of *reason, morality, christianity, nor even common modesty*, be your guide, what a shocking figure must you make *when the secrets of all hearts shall be open*, and you are all called upon to *give an account of the deeds done in the body*, and to receive your reward accordingly?—But is not your *pretended nice* nature yet offended?—Then let me intreat you, no longer give yourselves up to the *enticing snares of the devil*, but earnestly cry unto God, to take away the evil inclination to such impious scenes from your heart, and at your peril never dare to go near such places any more; nay, I intreat and beseech you in the name of all that is sacred to renounce them, for they end in *destruction*, and *guilt and misery* are in all their ways. But to proceed to the sons of wisdom,

Salvian, Bishop of Marseilles, says, “Plays are the *deluders of our hopes, cheats of life, and the repast of the devil*: for there the *salvation of christian people* is destroyed, and the *majesty of God profaned*; the *heathen deities* are substituted to all their *pastimes*;—in the one place, there is *immodesty*;—in another, *lewdness*;—in another, *madness*;—and the *Devil in them all*;—nay, all the *Devils in hell* (adds this author) are in every one of the places of these pastimes; for they *preside over the places dedicated to their worship*.”

By the *African code*, (or statute laws) it appears, that stage-players were ranked among *apostates, &c.* The *women actors* were counted so *scandalous*, that whoever married any of them, made himself incapable of being a *clergyman* by the *apostolical canon*.

The 6th council of *Constantinople*, which consisted almost of *Bishops*; the 2d *Nicene council*, held about 785, where were present, 3 or 400 *bishops*; the *Lateran council, A. D. 1215*, consisting



O may old Chester's loud alarming call,  
 Ring thro' our cities, and alarm them all;  
 O dread catastrophie consternation!  
 And wilt thou not awake, O British nation?

Behold! the country all flock in to see  
 The dismal scenes of this catastrophe,  
 It was, they all confess who hear or know,  
 A series of unutterable woe.

D 2

Altho'

consisting of *two patriarchs, 70 arch-bishops, 400 bishops, and 800 abbots and priors, universally condemn plays and interludes, and all theatrical sports.* And let me add, lastly, that God Almighty himself, hath (*of late in these Kingdoms*) sufficiently shown his particular displeasure at these abominations; that several of these fountain heads of debauchery, have been destroyed by fire, and many lives lost, our public papers have sufficiently advertised us; and do not we still persist to go on building new play-houses, nay, what is still more, transforming old churches into new play-houses? That this is the case in this city, is well known, and our dean and chapter stand headless by. O, sleepy sinful silence indeed, and are you so fast asleep, that even explosions cannot awake you? What then may we expect, Sodom's or Lisbon's doom? and were there no righteous Lots amongst us, this would as sure be the case, as that God is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

"What else could we expect in sober sense,

But such a fierce alarming providence."

If this is the case, it is surely time for even lay-men to open their mouths, and to speak (if possible) louder than the language of explosion; I therefore, even I your fellow citizen, do now call upon you, O ye sleepers, in the name of all that is sacred, and in the language of,

Every wisdom's son in every age,

And every serious heathen's moral page,

To awake, and if ye have any love for Jesus Christ, whose ambassadors and successors you pretend to be, evidence it, - by taking this place out of the hands of the players again immediately, and turning it into an evening lecture against the follies, fashions, vices, and diversions of the age; if not, any man may see with half the eye of an heathen, that you have no love to christianity, morality, nor even common modesty and decency.

Altho' we've seen what was the wretched case,  
 My muse cannot forget the ruin'd place ;  
 Old defecrated pile, thro' change of times,  
 How art thou fallen by our *modern crimes* !  
 Once warm'd with piety of Monks and Friars,  
 But Protestants have here much *warmer fires*.  
 " Yes, so we'd have it, say the friends of Rome,  
 " 'Tis but your just and long deserved doom."  
 Hear how ye make your enemies blaspheme,  
 Blush, ye *deformed* Protestants, for shame.  
 Blush, England, blush to see thy *deformation*,  
 And wake thee from thy *dream of reformation*.  
 But where are all our *moral teachers* gone ?  
 Will no *parochial minister*, not one,  
 Will ne'er a watchman warn his destin'd charge ?  
 Or, do *they live in ease themselves at large* ?  
 While here *dissenters* are on every side  
*Preaching and publishing their warnings wide*,  
*Not one* of all our *soft levitic tribe*,  
 Turns *preacher* here, or *sermon-printing scribe* ;  
 Alas ! how should they, since *they all are dumb* :  
 Well, well, the less we've had, the more's to come.

Don't nettle at my verses, grave divines,  
 For *stubborn facts* shall guard my muse's lines.  
 Don't think, thro' *prejudice*, my muse unkind,  
 For he that cannot see the fact is blind.  
 I honour much your office and your name,  
*Your sinful silence* puts them both to shame.  
 But while the *wolf* your *guardless flocks* doth take,  
 Don't blame me, if *I preach the shepherds wake*.  
 'Tis kindly done, a work of faith and love,  
 A *providential blessing* from above ;  
 No hypocritic cant, or false disguise,  
 I *plainly* set the *truth* before your eyes ;

No

No blind sectarian bigot warns you here,  
 They dare not speak the truth so plain, I fear;  
 Bigot to nought but *universal love*,  
 And truth impartial coming from above;  
 I've nought to fear, for he that bids me speak  
 Will guard my verses, tho' my muse is weak.  
 I dread no sacrilegious muse's smart,  
 'Tis *truth* that points my verses to the heart;  
 Far other fear is mine, lest when I speak  
 The *shepherds* are too *fast asleep* to wake.  
 But whether they'll awake or no, I see  
 They must be call'd upon to wake, by me;  
 And if they're willing to receive their light,  
 I know the Son of God will give them light.  
 But here I leave them, having given th' *alarm*,  
 They'll find I wish their flocks and them no harm.

Poets of old dar'd boldly speak the truth,\*  
 I see the danger of our rising youth;  
 This is a motive strong enough to me,  
 Behold, a stronger still, if that can be,  
 The death of these *poor ign'rants* loudly cry'd,  
 My muse hath told you how they bled and died;  
 Almighty

\* In the problems of *Antonius Zimaras*, I find this question and answer.

"Q. *How come tyrants to hate learned and wise men?*

"A. It is either by reason of the unlikeness of manners; for  
 "so it hath always been, that *wisdom* hath been *injured* by bad  
 "manners; or they suspect their fomenting sedition and tu-  
 "mults in the cities where their doctrine comes; or because  
 "they reprehend their faults. For, as *Plato* saith, poets have  
 "great force and skill either to *praise* or *dispraise*; and every  
 "man that has any regard to his credit or fame, should take  
 "heed how he offends a poet."

Many passages of the like import might be collected from  
 the antients, but this may suffice for the present to shew, that

"Poets of old dar'd boldly speak the truth."



Almighty God, by this *permissive stroke*,  
 Sure *loud enough to hearing ears* hath spoke.  
 My native country, O my native isle,  
 Return and seek his favour and his smile;  
 Why wilt thou run to such a *mad excess*,  
 Which *fiery vengeance only* can redress?

The day is come, day of restraining sin,  
*Theatres blaze*\* and few escape therein.  
 The day is come, day of rebuking vice,  
 And those destroy'd who fools to sin entice.  
 The day is come, day of *Almighty* scorn,  
 "The cities tremble and the countries mourn;  
 "Our crimes have reach'd celestial seats on high,  
 "And at th' Almighty's throne for vengeance cry;"  
 But who repents, tho' God in wrath proclaims  
 His hate to sin by instant burning flames?

Ye BRITISH magistrates, 'tis time to rise,  
 Experience sure should make e'en fools be wise.

O let

\* At Barnwell, a village near Cambridge, an annual fair is kept; and upon one of these occasions, on Friday September the 8th, 1727, a puppet-show was set up in a barn, which took fire, and in which was assembled about one hundred and forty persons; of which number no less than eighty persons perished, or received such injury by the flames as to expire *soon* after.

And in the Gentleman's Magazine for May 1772, there is the following account, viz.

"Tuesday, May 12, about eight in the evening, a sudden  
 "and most alarming fire broke out in the play-house at Am-  
 "sterdam, when the company of Flemish comedians were per-  
 "forming to a crowded audience. The confusion which this  
 "occasioned, no words can express. In crowding to escape,  
 "many limbs were broken, and some lives lost. Several per-  
 "sons of high rank, in the boxes, perished in the flames;  
 "more were suffocated, because the rapid progress of the fire  
 "rendered it impossible to afford them any relief. It is not  
 "known how it happened."

O let this loud and providential call  
 Rouse you to stand like faithful watchmen all.  
 O for more BROSTERS and more ———s † here,  
 Those memorable faithful watchmen dear!  
 Ye perjur'd magistrates of BRITAIN'S land,  
 Condemn not my discriminating hand;  
 BROSTER, my fellow citizen, is gone,  
 But here's no second BROSTER here, not one.  
 But O ye sleepy perjur'd watchmen, hear,  
 Nor think the sacred sentence too severe;  
 The blood of sinful crowds, who round you stand,  
 Shall be required at the watchman's hand.  
 Cast now, O cast the retrospective view,  
 And blush abash'd to find my verses true.

“ Throughout the land exults the thoughtless soul,  
 “ And boundless riot reigns without controul;  
 “ Gay pleasure charms and strong attracts the heart,  
 “ And festal joys their highest gust impart;  
 “ Luxurious meals each day with wine unite,  
 “ And studied scenes of sense engross the night,  
 “ Dice, cards, and heighten'd mirth, the soul's de-  
     light! }  
 “ Devoid of thought which wisdom's voice inspires,  
 “ Sunk in the whirlpool of untam'd desires;  
 “ From hence enormous vice triumphs aloud,  
 “ The comic droll diverts the thoughtless crowd;  
 “ Lascivious ballads in our streets are sung  
 “ From many a female, and an infant tongue;  
 “ The *Op'ra Girls* and Players too, you know,  
 “ In Church now sing the oratorio;

“ Our

† A magistrate of Liverpool, who suppressed the puppet-shows, &c. for the time of his mayoralty.

" Our church is made an house of merchandise,  
 " See! see! *how plain it is* before your eyes,  
 " *Adult'ry*\* vile, unmask'd, insults the land,  
 " And with audacious front lewd *harlots* stand."  
 The masquerade, that just and bold offence  
 To modest virtue and reproach to sense,  
*Pretends decorum*, and to hide its shame,  
 To *virtuous decency* † dares lay a claim.

The

\* Extract from the public paper for Tuesday May 21, 1771.  
 To the printer, &c.

Sir,

" The present state of matrimony in this kingdom is truly  
 " alarming; foreign luxury and foreign manners have de-  
 " bauched the minds of our women. ADULTERY is encouraged  
 " by the almost universal example of people of fashion, and  
 " virtue is star'd out of countenance. Ladies of the first rank,  
 " now-a-days, exceed in prostitution the most abandoned street-  
 " walkers. — 'Tis a notorious fact, that Lady L——r pro-  
 " stituted herself to every male servant in her husband's family,  
 " from the butler down to the postilion; and many familiar  
 " instances of other ladies will soon be made public, particularly  
 " † Lady G——d, Lady R——y, Lady U——o, &c. &c. &c. It  
 " is amazing with how much effrontery these women afterwards  
 " appear in public assemblies. Indeed there are so many of them  
 " that they keep one another in countenance, and bid fair in  
 " a short time to become the *majority*. In former ages, and in  
 " other states, laws have been enacted against adultery; in no  
 " age or country were such laws more requisite than at present  
 " in England." I am, Mr. Printer, yours, &c. A. Z. . .

† Extract from the Chester Paper of June 23d, 1772.

" We are informed, that the masqued ball at the Exchange  
 " in this city, on Thursday last, was conducted with the great-  
 " est elegance and decorum, notwithstanding the dreadful fears  
 " expressed" (by some of the outrageously virtuous) [a most  
 " unheard of phrase for absurdity, but a bold, capital and mas-  
 " terly stroke in the cause of outrageous infidelity] " of the  
 " consequences of a masqued ball; we have not as yet heard  
 " of any one action" (when all the actions were) " repugnant  
 " to the strictest rules of *decency* and *decorum*; which plainly  
 " proves



The *Macaroni* struts along our streets,  
 Out-braz'ning ev'ry modest face he meets.  
 "What hopes remain but heaven will on our head  
 "In righteous wrath its fiercest curses shed;  
 "A dread example *now* expos'd to sight,  
 "Of hate to order and contempt of light.  
 "Thus *Salem* (where once God was pleas'd to dwell)  
 "Is sunk like *Sodom*, to the gates of hell;  
 "Fulness of bread, bold pride, and wanton lust  
 "Have laid our abject glory in the dust."  
 Rouse, BRITAIN, rouse from thy lethargic state,  
 With tears and pray'rs avert impending fate;  
 Awake, I say again, Explosions call,  
 And find that *mercy* which *would save you all*.

E

O think

"proves, that to a *truly virtuous mind*, there is not more danger  
 "to be apprehended from a masquerade than from a play-house."  
 That's true, *Satan*, thou canst speak a truth tho' it be by a lying  
 spirit; but surely thou hadst either a very weak or ignorant  
 instrument here;—and thou inconsistent emissary of Satan, if  
 thou didst this ignorantly, not knowing the wickedness and  
 indecency of the stage (which no man in his senses can help  
 knowing) thou may'st yet obtain mercy at the hands of God;  
 but *first*, for thy *conviction* in order to *repentance*, I send thee  
 for instruction to the *testimonies of the ancient heathens*, referred  
 to and inserted in this poem.—But behold! reader, here comes  
 an instance of the *modest decency* of masquerades. "Masque-  
 "rades," says a serious author, "are the very dregs of baseness,  
 "and which sink the honour of human nature, to the lowest  
 "ebb of INFAMY. It is not long," adds he, "since a certain  
 "gentleman who frequented these, *debauched* HIS OWN DAUGH-  
 "TER; but when the mask was thrown off, and she appeared  
 "to be his own child, what rage, vexation and *anguish* pos-  
 "sessed the miserable *father*, who lived under horrible convul-  
 "sions in his mind, and at last died with great terror and  
 "distraction." Shocking indeed! And tho' this is but one  
 instance, yet surely it is enough to make one detest the name  
 of a masquerade for ever. Blush then, thou wretched apologizer,  
 and stand at my whipping-post, 'till my *good old heathens* have  
 done that for thee, which a rod should do for a *fool's back*.

O think what horror, terror, and despair  
 Awaits on all who bold disdain declare.  
 Bold sinners, and can no alarm prevail,  
 Because ye think you're in the *Church's* pale?  
 I now have warn'd you, spite of *Endor's* witch,  
 You're blindly led into destruction's ditch.

But soft, my muse, the milder accent prove,  
 Some must be gently drawn by *cords of love*.  
 I for myself this maxim true did find,  
 For only cords of love could draw my mind;  
 'Twas sweetest sounds first won my heart, I know,  
 Thank heaven, my soul, for sweetly singing *Rowe*.  
 By slow gradation grew my mind more strong,  
 To bear the striking energy of *Young*.

I know the softer sex love soft converse,  
 And such, I hope, will deign to read my verse;  
 My muse to neither sex her notes confines,  
 While thus I'd harmonize my former lines;  
 Not that my muse in them has ought to fear,  
 As tho' she'd been too terribly severe;  
 'Twas right I should to striking notes aspire,  
 My muse must burn, her subject was a fire.

Ye tender minds, with sanguine complex fraught,  
 Demanding softer phrase and gentler thought,  
 Say, whence proceeds your tenderness within?  
 And is your conscience tender too of sin?  
 If not, no wonder you my verse explode  
 Who dare not walk yourselves the heavenly road.  
 But if your tenderness be *grounded well*,  
 Employ it now, and listen, while I tell,  
 My muse would rather wish by love to charm,  
 And mercy's mildness than with wrath t' alarm.

When

When I shall write to none but such as you,  
 My verse shall flow more soft, but not less true.  
 But mark this truth, conspicuous to the wise,  
*God's judgments are but blessings in disguise.*  
 To fright the bad thus awful thunders roll,  
 While God in peace secures the faithful soul;  
 In the still voice of *long forbearing love*  
 He strives with man, his gratitude to prove;  
 But when bold sinners *goodness* will disdain,  
*Severity in goodness* then must reign;  
 And when they scorn his laws, his just good mind  
 In wrath corrects them, *wrath severely kind.*  
 Or if past feeling nothing will reclaim,  
 Their life's destruction glorifies his name.  
 Thus, when too vile for earth to give them room,  
 God out of *goodness* Sodom will consume.  
 Such is his goodness, such his changeless name,  
 "Consistent wisdom always wills the same."  
 Cease then, blind man, t' accuse his providence,  
 For *all is good* that *goodness* doth dispense.  
 Thus the almighty gracious God above  
 Doth both *restrain by fear*, and *draw by love*;  
 Fear this great God, sin not, but stand in awe,  
 Revere his power and learn to keep his law.

Shall thund'ring Mars or fiery Sol despise  
 The weaker midnight rays of Lunar's eyes?  
 Shall Lunar or dull Jupiter condemn  
 Bright Sol or Mars, because less warm than them?  
 No more should we, in different complex made,  
 The mild the warm, the warm the mild degrade;  
 Much less should we to wage our *selfish* war,  
 Set the Almighty's attributes to jar;  
 His different attributes have all *one use*,  
 Tho' man may think it *mystic* and *abstruse*;  
Whene'er



Whene'er they by his *sole commission* move,  
 His love descends in wrath, his wrath in love;  
 Whate'er's in nature or in human whim,  
 There's no contending properties in Him;  
 The absonance is chiefly in ourselves,  
 Poor fallen creatures, inconsistent elves.

Observe but nature and its differing pow'rs,  
 And know the constellations make them ours;  
 Its wholesome bitter while our taste absorbs  
 Why is the wormwood stil'd the king of herbs?  
 Doubtless the reason's this, it works a cure  
 Which salutary balms could not procure.  
 'Tis wisely order'd by our great Creator,  
 Who tempers air and earth, and fire and water.  
 But shall the wormwood and the balm contend,  
 'Cause God gave diff'rent powers to work one end?  
 No more should thou and I, tho' p'rhaps when known,  
 My natural complexion's like thy own.  
 I nor delight in horror nor in dread,  
 Yet see 'tis *life* and *fire* that wakes the dead;  
 For, while God's thunders bellow from the deep,  
 It is not fit that man should be asleep.

A roaring hurricane\* now stuns my ear,  
 And speaks from gust to gust fierce wrath is near;  
 (What wonder then if I for virtue's sake  
 Here try for once to preach the sleepers wake)  
 My minds disburthen'd, and I haste conclusion  
 Of this my unexpected kind *Explosion*.

“ O thou

\* Much damage was done both by wind and water, on sea and land; but I shall only refer the reader to the publick papers, for a hundredth part hath not been told as yet.

But mark this truth, conspicuous to the wise.  
 God's judgments are but blessings in disguise.

" O thou ! whose mighty mandate can sustain  
 " The whirlwind's force, the thunder of the main ;  
 " Now, and at every such important time,  
 " When I would only live to heaven and rhyme,  
 " Soothe with thy kind omnipotence, to rest  
 " Each perturbation that corrodes my breast."  
 Oh ! furious blast, alarming nature's powers,  
 And mixt the storm with inundating showers,  
 My cottage trembles, I my pen let fall,  
 And cry out, GOD HAVE MERCY ON US ALL.  
 " Such is the language of the man awake.  
 " His ardour such for what delights not thee." \*

\* Night Thoughts.

THE END.



